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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 JEDDAH 000448

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RIYADH, PLEASE PASS TO DHAHRAN

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TAGS: [ELAB](#) [KIRF](#) [KISL](#) [KTIP](#) [PHUM](#) [SA](#) [SMIG](#) [SOCI](#) [XF](#)
SUBJECT: TAIF CHRISTIANS DEPORTATIONS MAY BE IMMINENT

REF: A. JEDDAH 00186
[B](#). RIYADH 01211
[C](#). RIYADH 01218
[D](#). NEW YORK 00966

Classified By: ACTING CONSUL GENERAL CB TONEY FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#). (S) SUMMARY: An advocate for the Christian Indians arrested in April for holding a prayer service in Taif reveals to Poloff that deportation orders of these individuals are imminent. This is despite the fact that Assistant Minister of the Interior, Mohammed Bin Naif assured that this issue had been resolved and that no deportations will take place. END SUMMARY.

[2](#). (S) DEPORTATION ORDER STILL ON: PolOff met with Abraham on October 24 to discuss the potential deportations of Christian pilgrims in the Taif area. Abraham is a Jeddah-based Indian Christian who is helping the Taif Christians on a voluntary basis. He has previously taken part in the worship services in Taif that were the subject of the raid by Saudi police in April. (REFTELS)

[3](#). (S) 13 TAIF CHRISTIANS: The current group of potential deportees includes 13 individuals. There were 15 potential deportees according to Abraham's list of those threatened with deportation after the April worship service. Two of the original individuals, Majnu Iype and Ginsen Syriac have left the country. According to Abraham, Syriac was actually already deported on an order to his sponsoring company. This took place before the deportation issue had been supposedly resolved in August. All of the individuals live in Taif, except for Chengamanadu Geevarghese who works in Riyadh and travels to Taif occasionally; he was one of the original individuals arrested in Taif.

[4](#). (S) STILL SLATED FOR EXIT: Abraham believes that all of the remaining 13 individuals are still likely to get deportation orders through their companies in the immediate future. Abraham claims that some of the sponsoring companies may take the side of the employees and refuse to fulfill the deportation. He mentioned a British company that is not likely to cooperate with the government.

[5](#). (S) The gatherings that took place in April have ceased completely at the recommendation of Abraham. The place of prayer, an apartment that had been occupied by two of the individuals, Jose Varughese and Lizy B. David, has been chained shut by local police. As a result the couple was forced to move into a new home.

[6](#). (S) ORDERS FROM GOVERNORATE: Abraham notes that all deportation orders are being handed down directly from the

Mecca GovernateGovernorate to sponsoring companies, who are then asked to hand over the passport with an exit visa. The employee is not contacted directly by the GovernateGovernorate.

¶7. (S) EXITS BLOCKED: In recent weeks, Abraham has received word that the passport office will be blocking the individuals in question from leaving the country. In response to a question as to why there is an attempt to block people from leaving the country who are already facing deportation, Abraham replied that these individuals might still be prosecuted and jailed for the original crime of holding the prayer service. Abraham claimed that the entire group is legitimately afraid not only of deportation, but also of potential prosecution.

¶8. (S) NO HELP FROM INDIAN CONSULATE: Abraham did contact the Indian Consulate in Jeddah at one point, but they were only issued a letter saying that the case would be looked at. Abraham does not see the Indian consulate as a potential source of support in sensitive cases like this one. There is no evidence that the Indian consulate or embassy has done anything to help resolve this case.

¶9. (S) COMMUNICATION LINKS: The communication chain for information on this case is as follows: Abraham has been the main supplier of information on this case to Embassy Riyadh and Consulate Jeddah. He is in regular contact with only one of the thirteen individuals, Mr. Reji Johnson Nayattu-Kalayil. Nayattu-Kalayil is directly in touch with the other twelve. The information that the deportees are

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receiving is from the person Abraham refers to as the guarantor, usually a representative from the sponsoring company. The guarantors receive their information from the Mecca GovernateGovernorate. One person that Abraham cites as being particularly important in gathering information is a Saudi guarantor that bailed our Alexander Mathew, Chengamanadu Geevarghese, and Tony Parampathor Thomas. The guarantor is a Saudi, not related to any company the men are working for, and posted bail out of generosity. He apparently has excellent sources of information within the government. This individual has in recent weeks been one of the main individuals to note that the problem of deportation is persisting.

¶10. (S) COMMENT. It is very hard to verify that the information being received on this case is completely accurate. The chain of communication does not allow for corroboration since it is all filtered through a few individuals. The connection between the guarantors - particularly the unattached benevolent Saudi - and the government is unclear and therefore makes it hard to verify the information. It would be very useful to learn more about Syriac, the individual that according to Abraham has already been deported. This can be used as evidence - if confirmed - that the deportations are a real possibility.

¶11. (S) While Mohammad Bin Naif has noted that only the Ministry of the Interior can issue a deportation (Reftel), the local GovernateGovernorate seems to not be getting this message. An order in writing would be necessary to ensure effective communication between the Ministry of Interior and local government officials.

¶12. (S) The Saudis have invited the Indian Prime Minister to the upcoming UNGA debate on King Abdullah's interfaith dialogue initiative in New York. (REFTEL D) This could prompt the SAG to solve the problem to avoid bad press that would distract attention from the meeting. END COMMENT.
TONEY